

THE CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

THE WOMAN OF ONLY ONE VIRTUE

Chapter LXX.

The people at the hotel are beginning to call upon me and they prove interesting, although I don't think I shall care to make friends with many of them. The women about a family hotel seem such idle, frivolous creatures. Most of them are only walking advertisements of their husbands' prosperity and as such they wear fine clothes and jewels morning, noon and night.

Little Miss Hollaway came up yesterday morning just as I was putting away my laundry. She tapped on my door and came in before I could get there to open it. Seeing me stop with surprise in the middle of the floor, she said: "Didn't I hear you say, 'Come in?'"

"You must have made a mistake," I answered, "as I was coming to the door to let you in."

I know she did not hear me say, "Come in." She wanted, if possible, to take me unawares.

She walked all around my rooms and pointedly asked me if certain pictures and other furnishings were wedding presents. And as I still stood until she could be seated she said:

"My dear Mrs. Waverly, go right on with your mending, although I must say I do not see what a young married woman would have to mend in the first few months of her married life."

"I have known young married women who had to mend things like stockings and underclothes in the first few months, and sometimes I have seen great rents in their hearts as well as broken ideals and tempers that badly needed mending," I answered.

"Mercy!" she exclaimed. "Some one told me you had a literary turn of mind and now I know it—you talk like a book, but I never saw one of those bookish women who liked to sew and mend. I must confess that I

don't read very much because, between you and me, I don't think men want women to know too much and I just hate sewing. Take my advice and don't do either—they won't get you anywhere with your husband."

"What do you do to pass away the time?" I asked wonderingly.

"Well, I call on my friends; I shop; go to the matinees, teas and other social affairs."

"How long have you been married, Mrs. Hollaway?" I asked.

"Five years," she answered.

"And you have no children?"

"Mercy! No! What would I do with children?"

I thought to myself that this was the first thing she had said that had any sense. She certainly would not know what to do with children, and it was better not only for them, but the world that she never had any, but immediately there rose before my eyes those poor, little, half-starved tots that came to the ward school where I had taught and I remembered their homes, their over-worked mother, and I knew it was because this woman shirked her duty that the children of the other one must suffer.

Mrs. Hollaway called herself a good woman. She would pull her skirts away from the woman who lives just exactly as she does outside of marriage. But I think there is little to choose between them.

When Dick came home at night I said something of this sort to him and he said: "What's the use, Margie, of worrying; probably she is what Hollaway wants in a wife."

"Perhaps so, Dick," I answered, "but it makes one resentful to think that a woman like that can have unlimited leisure, beautiful clothes and jewels when some poor mother who has been the best kind of a wife must work and worry because she has not enough to feed and clothe her children."